

Visitor Services Project Glacier National Park

Report Summary

- This report describes the results of a study of visitors to Glacier National Park during July 29 - August 4, 1990. Five hundred sixty-six questionnaires were distributed and 481 returned, an 85% response rate.
- This report profiles Glacier visitors. A separate appendix has their comments about the park and their visit. A summary of these comments is included in this report and the appendix.
- Visitor groups were commonly families (71%); often in groups of two (43%) or four persons (20%). Thirty-one percent of the visitors were 31-45 years old and 21% were 15 years old or younger. Most (59%) were on their first Glacier visit.
- International visitors comprised 15% of the total visitation; 12% were Canadian visitors. U.S. visitors came from Montana (13%), Washington (8%), Minnesota (6%), and California (6%) and 45 other states.
- Sixty percent of all visitors spent one or more days in the park; of these 16% stayed 2 days; 14% spent 6 or more days. Forty percent of all visitors stayed less than one day, of these 27% stayed five to six hours; another 27% stayed four hours or less.
- Almost half of Glacier's visitors (49%) identified the park as their primary destination.
- Most visitors went sightseeing (97%), took photographs (89%), viewed wildlife (87%), and visited visitor centers/museums (72%). Most visitors (65%) said the primary reason they visited Glacier was to view wildlife/scenery.
- At Glacier, most visitors went to Logan Pass (80%) and St. Mary (68%). Sixty percent of the visitors first entered the park at West Glacier and 32% first entered the park at St. Mary.
- During their visit, the average visitor group spent \$253.00 in the Glacier area; the average per capita expenditure was \$82.00. Visitors commonly spent either \$1-50.00 (28%) or \$251.00 or more (28%). Visitors spent the greater proportion of their money for lodging (34%) and food (29%).
- The most important interpretive services to visitors were the park brochure and visitor center personnel; the least important was the park radio information station. Of the services they used, visitors rated ranger-led walks, the park brochure, self-guided trails, and evening programs as highest quality; the park radio information station was rated the lowest quality.
- The most important commercial visitor services were showers, grocery stores, and food service; the least important service was the red bus tours. Food service and boat tours were rated highest quality; showers were lowest quality. Visitors made many additional comments about their visits.

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact Dr. Gary E. Machlis, Sociology Project Leader, University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies Unit, College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range Sciences, Moscow, Idaho 83843 or call (208) 885-7129.